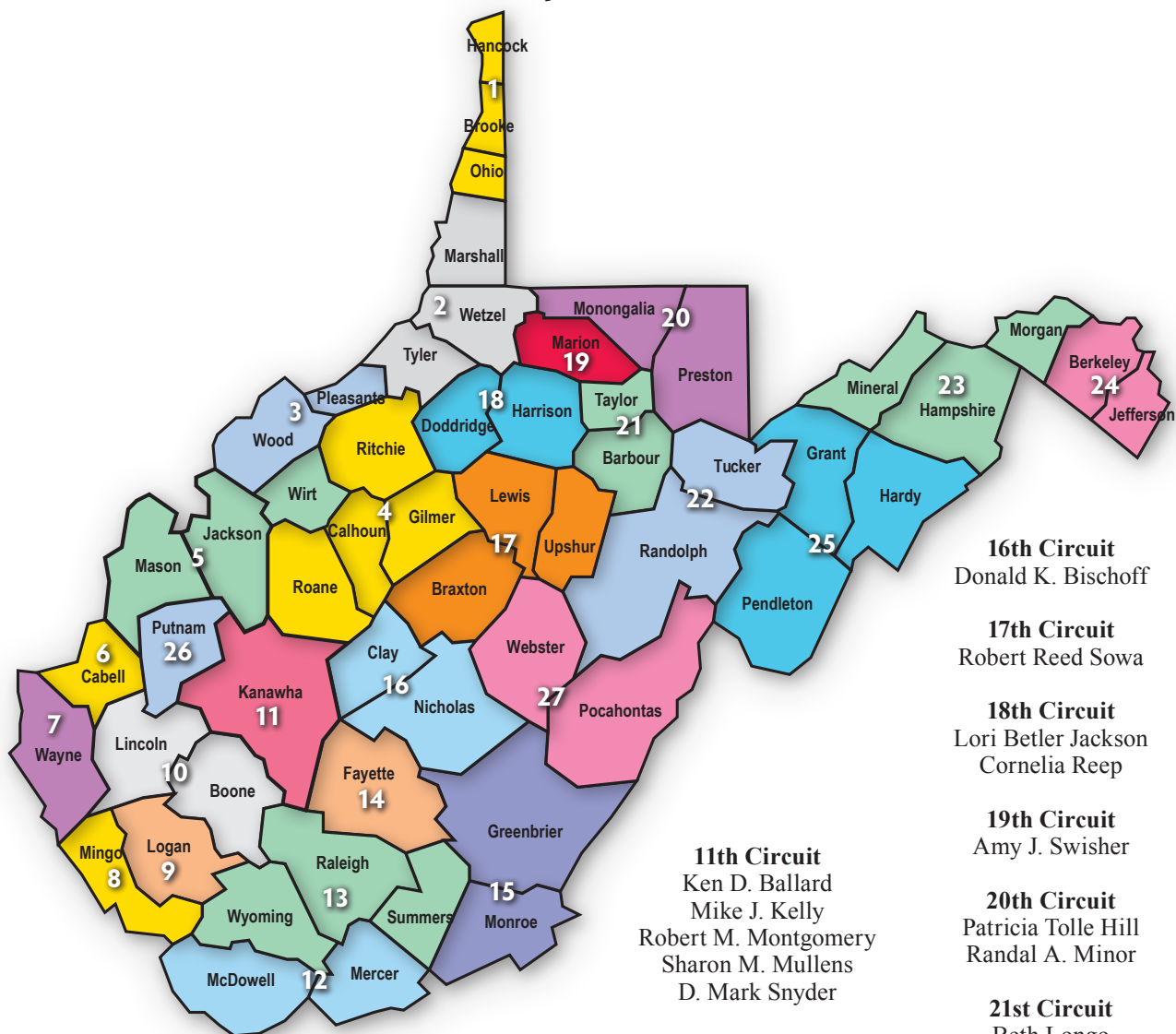


Roster of Family Court Judges

2009 Family Court Circuits



1st Circuit
Joyce Dumbaugh
Chernenko
William F. Sinclair

2nd Circuit
Robert C. Hicks

3rd Circuit
Brian C. Dempster
C. Darren Tallman

4th Circuit
Larry S. Whited

5th Circuit
Rebecca Stafford Cornett
Connie Fisher Thomas

6th Circuit
Ronald E. Anderson
Patricia A. Keller

7th Circuit
R. Stephen Lewis

8th Circuit
Miki J. Thompson

9th Circuit
Kelly Gilmore Codispoti
Jason D. Harwood

10th Circuit
Cynthia J. Jarrell
Scott E. Elswick

11th Circuit
Ken D. Ballard
Mike J. Kelly
Robert M. Montgomery
Sharon M. Mullens
D. Mark Snyder

12th Circuit
Anthony Bisaha
Lisa K. Clark
Mary Ellen Griffith

13th Circuit
K. Bruce Lazenby
H. Suzanne McGraw
Louise G. Staton

14th Circuit
Janet Frye Steele

15th Circuit
David M. Sanders

16th Circuit
Donald K. Bischoff

17th Circuit
Robert Reed Sowa

18th Circuit
Lori Betler Jackson
Cornelia Reep

19th Circuit
Amy J. Swisher

20th Circuit
Patricia Tolle Hill
Randal A. Minor

21st Circuit
Beth Longo

22nd Circuit
Michele W. Good

23rd Circuit
Charles E. Parsons

24th Circuit
David P. Greenberg
Sally G. Jackson
William T. Wertman Jr.

25th Circuit
Amanda Hatfield See

26th Circuit
William M. Watkins, III

27th Circuit
Jeffrey L. Hall

Family Courts

Before 2001, West Virginia had thirty-three family law masters who served twenty-four family court circuits. Family law masters were special commissioners the governor appointed to hear family court cases and to issue recommended orders to circuit courts. A constitutional amendment approved by voters in November 2000 elevated family courts to a separate court system with thirty-five judges in twenty-six circuits.

The governor appointed the first family court judges to one-year terms. They then stood for election in partisan races in 2002 and took office for initial six-year terms in January 2003. Subsequent terms beginning January 1, 2009, are for eight years, the same as terms of circuit judges. In 2007 the Legislature added ten

family court judges, one additional family court circuit, and restructured nine circuits to balance caseloads statewide. The new judges were elected on November 4, 2008, and began their eight-year terms on January 1, 2009.

Family court judges have authority to make final decisions in family court cases. Circuit courts hear appeals of family court decisions unless both parties agree to appeal divorce and other domestic relations decisions directly to the Supreme Court of Appeals.

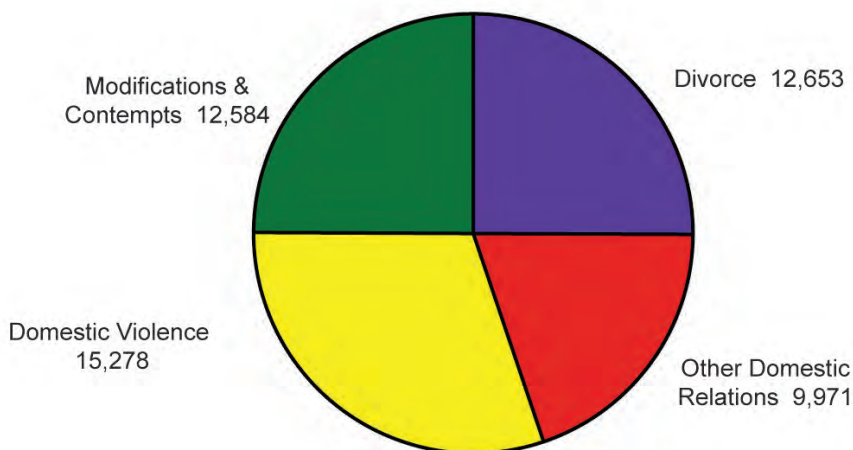
Family courts have jurisdiction over divorce, annulment, separate maintenance, paternity, grandparent visitation, name change, infant guardianship, child custody, and family support proceedings, except those incidental to child abuse and neglect. Family

court judges also hold final hearings in civil domestic violence protective order proceedings and may perform marriages.

In 2009, there were 37,902 new cases filed in family courts in West Virginia. Of those, 15,278 were domestic violence, 12,653 were divorces, and 9,971 were other domestic relations. There also were 12,584 modification and contempt proceedings in cases reopened during the year, which were not counted as new cases filed. Those proceedings accounted for 24.9 percent of the family court judges' statewide workload.

Family court judges can refer parents to mediation and parent education and refer children for guardian *ad litem* services. The Supreme Court does not charge families who cannot afford to pay for these services.

2009 Family Court Caseload



West Virginians Served by Supreme Court-Supported Family Visitation Centers in 2009

Category	Number
Total Parents Served	947
Fathers	441
Mothers	454
Grandparent/Legal Guardian	52
Children Involved	780
Supervised Visitation	719
Neutral Drop-off	370

**** Total number of parents served = fathers + mothers + grandparent/legal guardian**

Guardians *ad litem* must be attorneys. They conduct investigations to help family court judges make decisions in the best interest of the people the guardians represent. Family court judges can appoint guardians *ad litem* on behalf of children, incarcerated persons, and people who have been adjudicated incompetent who are involved in family court disputes.

Family court judges require all parents to attend mediation sessions if they cannot otherwise resolve parenting issues or agree to a parenting plan. Parents first go to individual pre-mediation screening sessions with a trained family case coordinator to determine if they are candidates for mediation. About twenty percent of parents are not candidates for mediation for various reasons.

If parents go to mediation, they must attend a mediation session with a Supreme Court-approved family court mediator who helps them draft a parenting plan to present to a family court judge.

Along with mediation, family court judges order parents who are divorcing to attend a one-time, mandatory parent education class. Classes are offered in every West Virginia county. Adults learn about preparing a parenting plan, mediation, and the effects of family dissolution and domestic violence on children. The class teaches parents how to minimize the negative effects of divorce and family dissolution on children.

In 2007 the Supreme Court approved an expansion of “high-conflict” parent education classes and in September 2008 the Court

launched child-focused classes for parents who are divorcing. These classes are designed for parents who continue to have disputes after attending the mandatory one-time parent education class required of all divorcing couples who have children. Family courts refer select couples to the series of six, two-hour classes.

The advanced child-focused parent education classes educate parents regarding the impact of conflict on their child’s development; help parents identify their contribution to conflict while increasing impulse control; teach parents anger management, communication, and conflict resolution skills; and educate parents about children’s issues in divorce.

Family Court County Filings

County	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Barbour	196	236	244	247	184	138	141	244
Berkeley	1,713	1,740	1,728	1,814	1,803	1,722	1,603	1,569
Boone	649	553	645	621	605	663	610	608
Braxton	234	209	208	235	220	233	243	282
Brooke	341	300	318	304	344	332	308	323
Cabell	2,572	2,483	2,475	2,454	2,388	2,328	2,440	2,341
Calhoun	137	147	113	119	142	174	158	130
Clay	305	249	258	325	326	282	243	288
Doddridge	117	117	121	124	142	133	125	126
Fayette	1,031	1,039	933	1,030	946	990	897	981
Gilmer	125	122	86	126	66	50	58	123
Grant	220	192	186	180	250	127	191	121
Greenbrier	714	685	593	640	685	713	736	630
Hampshire	308	307	308	282	279	333	254	276
Hancock	611	456	519	595	443	388	516	505
Hardy	271	230	264	276	289	257	247	218
Harrison	1,388	1,282	1,263	1,354	1,268	1,187	1,181	1,092
Jackson	703	446	560	456	487	457	419	472
Jefferson	817	736	768	752	775	826	783	677
Kanawha	4,686	4,244	4,153	4,302	4,741	4,270	4,418	4,375
Lewis	284	282	265	276	233	285	241	283
Lincoln	447	417	474	528	549	511	631	550
Logan	1,350	1,156	1,052	1,185	1,283	1,210	1,192	1,225
Marion	868	920	858	843	849	836	901	842
Marshall	582	554	513	448	526	465	547	461
Mason	596	433	529	562	474	524	461	480
McDowell	628	622	684	781	3,220	817	804	788
Mercer	1,755	1,724	1,834	1,894	1,943	1,830	1,644	1,691
Mineral	425	467	507	403	362	380	407	426
Mingo	1,108	874	1,025	1,061	1,125	1,119	1,097	1,157
Monongalia	1,195	1,235	1,208	1,171	1,183	1,228	1,150	1,110
Monroe	299	303	329	295	289	298	233	222
Morgan	223	212	186	223	218	274	226	249
Nicholas	615	521	507	518	471	495	457	460
Ohio	687	678	620	731	717	1,386	659	674
Pendleton	71	96	78	95	87	56	58	60
Pleasants	127	105	131	156	129	108	109	136
Pocahontas	165	182	172	214	221	211	184	183
Preston	609	600	554	523	514	559	521	499
Putnam	926	930	957	904	946	923	890	871
Raleigh	1,772	1,637	1,594	1,669	1,617	1,529	1,319	1,637
Randolph	613	560	552	511	505	428	500	502
Ritchie	191	174	148	156	185	145	189	228
Roane	330	357	300	362	305	329	278	319
Summers	242	252	270	305	284	246	445	221
Taylor	201	217	241	221	214	169	199	178
Tucker	107	100	77	81	99	92	98	124
Tyler	158	117	151	136	132	145	147	154
Upshur	364	308	347	343	312	339	357	397
Wayne	657	676	776	780	821	840	909	800
Webster	222	230	243	237	193	238	206	179
Wetzel	272	264	279	230	248	222	290	273
Wirt	112	90	106	131	103	114	117	131
Wood	1,826	1,633	1,633	1,607	1,647	1,524	1,420	1,506
Wyoming	737	667	763	663	793	746	661	768
TOTAL	37,902	35,366	35,706	36,479	39,180	36,224	35,118	35,165

2009 Family Court Case Filings

County	Total Filings	Divorce	Other Domestic Relations	Total Domestic Violence
Barbour	196	83	41	72
Berkeley	1,713	559	459	695
Boone	649	245	186	218
Braxton	234	95	58	81
Brooke	341	128	125	88
Cabell	2,572	680	554	1,338
Calhoun	137	64	34	39
Clay	305	122	68	115
Doddridge	117	37	29	51
Fayette	1,031	343	330	358
Gilmer	125	56	20	49
Grant	220	63	64	93
Greenbrier	714	257	184	273
Hampshire	308	132	104	72
Hancock	611	179	226	206
Hardy	271	88	91	92
Harrison	1,388	391	289	708
Jackson	703	264	162	277
Jefferson	817	250	278	289
Kanawha	4,686	1,370	1,414	1,902
Lewis	284	135	72	77
Lincoln	447	179	86	182
Logan	1,350	394	416	540
Marion	868	315	222	331
Marshall	582	142	184	256
Mason	596	220	151	225
McDowell	628	208	212	208
Mercer	1,755	494	474	787
Mineral	425	162	151	112
Mingo	1,108	339	335	434
Monongalia	1,195	383	248	564
Monroe	299	99	59	141
Morgan	223	94	72	57
Nicholas	615	259	99	257
Ohio	687	200	224	263
Pendleton	71	33	17	21
Pleasants	127	61	24	42
Pocahontas	165	39	49	77
Preston	609	184	150	275
Putnam	926	379	177	370
Raleigh	1,772	651	420	701
Randolph	613	199	142	272
Ritchie	191	63	44	84
Roane	330	161	62	107
Summers	242	83	75	84
Taylor	201	98	42	61
Tucker	107	42	18	47
Tyler	158	65	28	65
Upshur	364	166	80	118
Wayne	657	306	189	162
Webster	222	103	35	84
Wetzel	272	102	81	89
Wirt	112	38	31	43
Wood	1,826	604	455	767
Wyoming	737	247	131	359
Total	37,902	12,653	9,971	15,278

Total	Contempt	Modification
133	69	64
620	253	367
503	131	372
23	7	16
61	11	50
761	281	480
54	18	36
133	48	85
25	9	16
496	202	294
24	9	15
84	23	61
335	186	149
131	48	83
46	17	29
89	36	53
276	118	158
248	89	159
272	119	153
1,870	747	1,123
49	23	26
372	186	186
333	92	241
245	79	166
260	82	178
171	81	90
209	63	146
410	122	288
162	52	110
145	48	97
314	120	194
97	55	42
90	38	52
169	48	121
169	90	79
34	4	30
3	1	2
125	64	61
181	72	109
474	252	222
594	264	330
275	95	180
83	45	38
133	45	88
76	19	57
144	50	94
35	10	25
48	9	39
84	12	72
149	55	94
112	35	77
114	45	69
37	13	24
211	62	149
293	101	192
12,584	4,853	7,731